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The Duties of Industry, Frugality and Sobriety.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED

Before a Society of TRADESMEN and ARTIFICERS,

IN THE

Parish Church of St. CHAD, SALOP,
on *Easter-Monday*, 1766.

Published at the Request of the SOCIETY.

THE THIRD EDITION.

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Bishop of St. ASAPH.

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MDCCCLXX.



To the *Members* of the *Society*
of *Tradesmen*, &c. and to
the poorer *Inhabitants* of *St.*
Chad's, SALOP.

I Put the following *Sermon* into your hands;
and desire you will accept it as a token
of my sincere love and regard for you. In
consequence of which I make it my earnest
request, that you will read and consider it
with seriousness and attention: and I am
sure you will be the happier, as well as the
better men for practising the duties it re-
commends.

I am,

Your very affectionate friend,

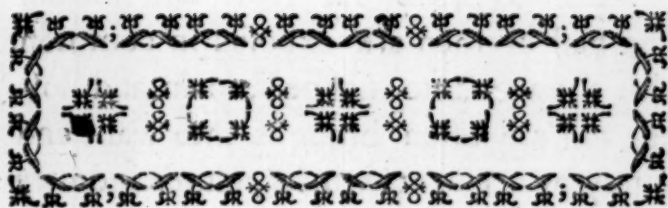
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GAL. vi. 2.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

IT is with great pleasure that I take the part here assigned me in assisting the designs of a society, formed as I am persuaded upon the principles of charity, and regulated by those of religion and virtue.

The great end and design of true religion is to make men happy both in this world and the next. The latter of these, as it is the great concern of all mankind, so it is in the power of all to secure to themselves by a life of piety and virtue. But our happiness in this life is for wise reasons put more out of our power. Our enjoyments here are at the best mixed with crosses, troubles and disappointments; the

the better to prove our faith and virtue. The best of men are exposed in common with the worst to sickness, pain and losses, and are often brought into want and misery by accidents which neither industry nor prudence could prevent. Yet still in such circumstances religion is a sure source of consolation, and brings with it the best succours and support that can be had ; by not only fortifying the mind with patience and resignation, extending our prospects and hopes into another life, and assuring us there of a happiness proportioned to our steadfastness and perseverance in well-doing ; but by deriving to us likewise the compassion, assistance and relief of our fellow christians and neighbours : who are bound by the religion they profess, *above all things to have fervent charity towards their brethren ; to have the same care one for another ; and if one member suffers, as members of the same body, to suffer with it.*

If then it be the intention of religion to procure the happiness of mankind ; all such designs as are directed to this end are so far acts of religion : and when entered

tered upon with a true christian temper and from a principle of charity, will certainly be accepted as such; as instances of duty and obedience to God. It is therefore, I think, an appointment of great propriety and decorum in the present and other like charitable societies, to meet thus at times in a religious manner; to offer up your vows and oblations of charity to heaven; and to beg the blessing of God on your pious endeavours.

It is indeed a pleasure to see, while so many parties and meetings are daily forming for pleasure and idleness, for the support of factions and uncharitable distinctions, and often for nothing better than revelling and riot; that there are not wanting some which have a nobler end for their object; and which it is no way unworthy of our character as men or as christians to join in. This praise I think we may assume to the present society: the design of which is by the joint and united endeavours of many, to guard against and repel the evils which are alike incident to all; and which, every one singly and unsupported may be unable to bear.

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This is in a very proper sense to *bear one another's burdens*; to share freely and willingly the misfortunes, the infirmities, wants and troubles of others: and is so far an act of charity, and a *fulfilling the law of Christ*. But it is farther at the same time an act of prudence too, as it is a providing for every one's own wants and those of his family; it is throwing his own burden into the common stock; and purchasing by the relief he ministers to others, a title to the same relief in his turn. Both these principles then conspire to promote the present institution; as far as you are influenced by the latter, though it doth not deserve the name and character of charity, it is however a commendable act of duty. It is a christian prudence to arm ourselves by a provident foresight against the evils of life; to prepare ourselves for a chearful submission to the dispensations of providence; and to lay up for the benefit and security of his family, every man, from time to time, some little, as God hath prospered him.

But I doubt not most of you are actuated by the nobler principle I have mentioned;

oned; and take a generous pleasure in preventing the wants of your brethren, and in resolving that none of your friends and associates in this labour of love, shall be destitute in his distress of any helps and assistances you can give him. This, as I said, is true christian charity, and is in the best sense *fulfilling the law of Christ—the royal law of love*, as the apostle calls it: which enjoins no duties so much as those of tenderness, gentleness, compassion, feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, visiting the sick, and whatever else is generous, kind, beneficent and good-natured; whatever tends to promote the happiness or to lessen the griefs and sorrows of mankind.

This is so considerable a part of our christian duty, that it is frequently in scripture spoken of as comprising the whole. *Love*, or charity, saith the apostle, *is the fulfilling of the law*. And *whosoever loveth his brother hath fulfilled the law*. It is certain that there are other duties, all that are comprehended under piety and temperance, equally necessary and indispensable with these. But it is here sup-

posed that the duty we are speaking of cannot consist in all its extent and latitude without including the rest. The same benevolence of mind, which leads us to love not only those who are endeared to us by relation, friendship, or kindness received, but even those who are most estranged from us by a difference in religion, party, or even by resentment and ill-will, will certainly lead us to love God, the fountain of all good, who made us what we are, and gave us all that we possess. The heart which feels for the misery of others, and melts with pity even at the distresses of an enemy, will surely overflow with gratitude towards the common father of being, who provideth for all things living *with plenteousness; whose compassions never fail; and whose mercies are seen over all his works.* And that diffusive charity which carries us as it were out of ourselves, and interests us in the welfare of all mankind, is in its whole nature opposite to the narrow principle of self-love; and can taste but little pleasure or happiness in self-indulgence, or the gratifications of appetite and sensual inclination. Hence it is that love or christian charity is said to be the fulfilling—to be

be not a part but the sense and spirit of the whole moral law. The same principle which leads you to concur in this good work will, if opened and unfolded into all its consequences, lead you into all righteousness; to fulfill the duties you owe to God and yourselves as well as those to your neighbour. And it is with pleasure, that I observe a proper attention paid to these in the regulations under which your society is governed, and by which its meetings are modelled and conducted. These are so well calculated for all the ends that can be answered by such an institution, that I have little left me but to commend to your constant practice the charity, piety and sobriety which they inculcate; and to exhort you to extend the influence of these principles farther, into your whole life and conversation.

And first, as charity is the ground and foundation on which your little society is built, this as we are taught in the text, is fulfilling in a particular manner the law of Christ. For charity is in a peculiar manner the command of Christ. *A new commandment*, says he, *I give unto you, that* John xiii.
34, 35.
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ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another. This then is so necessary to the disciples of Christ, that we cannot take to ourselves the name or character of christians without it. And as we have above seen that charity in its largest extent, can scarce consist without the practice of the other christian duties of piety and temperance, so it is certain that we cannot in any good degree pretend to these virtues without that charity, which I am recommending. If any man, saith the apostle, say I love God, and loveth not his brother, he is a liar : for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And again, who so hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? That is, how can such an one pretend to piety and religion, when he is wanting in a common duty bound upon him by nature and reason, and the common ties of humanity ; but more especially recommended and more earnestly than almost any other by the precepts of the gospel? In like manner in
vain

1 John
iv. 20.

1 John
iii. 17.

vain do we pretend to that command over ourselves, that subordination of our appetites and passions to reason, in which the virtue of temperance consists, when self-love still contracts our hearts, and shuts out all charitable care and concern for others. It is therefore with great propriety that charity takes the first rank amongst the christian graces, as it is necessary in some degree to qualify us for the very name of christians; and as it springs from or begets in us that temper of mind which is naturally productive of every other virtue.

But there are two of these virtues which I must mention as more immediately connected with charity, and in the lower ranks of life so necessary to the exercise of it, that they must be included in the duty itself: and these are industry and frugality. With respect to the first of these, the apostle hath given it in charge to those of low degree, that *they labour, working with their hands the thing that is good, that they may have to give to him that needeth.* Without these virtues to supply and increase your store, you cannot hope
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Ephes.
iv. 28.

2 Theff.
iii. 10.

1 Tim. v.
8.

for the happy power of relieving others by your bounty or succouring them in their distress. Nor can you so securely attribute to yourselves the virtue and merit of charity from any good-will or kind wishes you may bear to your neighbour, when you have by your own faults deprived yourselves of the means of giving the proper proof of these to the world and to yourselves. Without these virtues, instead of the pleasure of relieving others, and of being independent in yourselves, you will soon be in danger of wanting this relief from others : and that without the satisfaction of deserving it or any just ground to expect it. For the injunction of St. Paul is founded on the justest reason, *If any man will not work, neither let him eat.* Instead of the praise and character of charity, you will incur the heavy censure of the same apostle : *If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

It is the first of these virtues, industry, which makes the artificer and the labourer as useful and valuable as any members in society.

society. And as God hath allotted to men very different stations and conditions of life, and assigned them different gifts and talents, to profit withal, different occupations and employments for the good of the whole; therefore to be diligent in the several provinces in which he hath placed us, is a duty we owe to him as well as to our neighbour and ourselves. It is our proper business, and a sort of trust reposed in us by the governor of the world: and therefore it is not only an offence against society, but a breach of our duty to heaven to desert or neglect it. And on the other hand, a diligent discharge of this duty from a principle of conscience towards God, is in its proper time and place an act of religious obedience; and will surely be as well accepted of God, as any act of piety which may be thought more immediately addressed to his honour.

And this I the rather mention because there are, I fear, some well-disposed persons who think it pious to retire more from the world and from business; to shut out all secular concerns from their minds; and to spend their whole time in the ex-

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exercises of religion, devotion and prayer. But these duties how necessary soever to the christian life, are not intended to exclude us from being useful and beneficial to the world; from taking care of our families; or from doing what our rank and relation to the publick require. We may allot a sufficient time to our devotions without interfering with these, which are certainly some of the first duties of a christian. We may live in the world as Christ and his apostles did, and be busy in doing all the good we can, without setting our hearts too much upon it; without centering our hopes and affections in it; and without being polluted by it. Let me then exhort you to be chearful and active in that state of life to which God hath called you, and to consider this chearfulness and industry as acts of piety and duty to God: and at the same time to be ever punctual and attentive to the more immediate duties of religion and the care of your souls; that by this double diligence you may *make your calling and election sure*. Be often recollecting, as you will have many vacant minutes in your busiest days to do, the state of your souls, the
 great

great motives, hopes and prospects of religion. Let every morning and evening witness to the offering up your prayers and praises to God : and this will consecrate the labours of the day, bring a *blessing on your basket and on your store*, and make you *rejoice in all that you put your hands unto.*

But above all, neglect not that day which God in especial mercy to the laborious part of mankind, and in condescension to their spiritual wants, has consecrated to rest and a cessation from worldly cares ; that they may have leisure for reflection and retirement, and to attend the duties of religion without distraction. Without this your spiritual powers will insensibly decay ; your best resolutions will be forgotten, and the spirit of religion and piety, the support of every virtue, will wear out and be lost. And on the other hand, by a due improvement of this time you will continually grow in grace ; the motives and principles of virtue will be kept ever awake and active in your breasts ; and you will be secured in your commerce with the world against all its temptations.

Let nothing therefore tempt you to absent yourselves on this day from the publick service of the church ; or from allotting some part of it to the instruction of your families ; to the examining the state of your spiritual concerns ; and the renewing in yourselves all such resolutions as may be necessary to guard against *the sins which do most easily beset you*. If business, however urgent, and still more if idleness or pleasure rob you of this time ; this neglect will not only bring your virtue into danger, but will itself add to the number of your crimes.

But I proceed to the other virtue which I mentioned as instrumental and necessary to your charity, which is frugality ; or a prudent and virtuous use of that which through the blessing of God is gained by your labour and industry. And this is the more necessary to be mentioned at a time when luxury is not only prevailing among the great and wealthy, but has deeply infected all degrees of men amongst us. If this, as is frequent, disables men of fortune from doing any thing that is good or useful to the world, it is certain that the
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least degree of it, the least indulgence in vain and unnecessary expence must put it out of the power of those who subsist by their labour, not only to do the good offices they would to their brethren; but even to make the provision they ought for their own families. It is frugality that must make our industry useful to ourselves. For to what purpose do we labour for that which profiteth not, or perhaps may be only the means to betray us into sin? But where these virtues are united, how oft do we see men by these alone maintain their families in neatness and plenty, free from want and care at home, and able to extend their good offices abroad? How oft is their pleasure and innocence, their health and peace and content of mind to be envied by those who live in greater splendor and in all the pomp of honour and power? And on the other hand, is it not melancholy often to see what has been purchased by painful industry and labour squandered away in unprofitable and foolish recreations; often in the guilty indulgences of gaming, drinking and the like—to see the artificer of better skill, instead of making
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his family more happy and himself more useful ; tempted by his greater gains to indulge himself only the more in idleness or sinful pleasures ? There is not sure a more affecting or a more pitiable object than that of a family unfed, uncloathed, untaught at home, while the master of it is wantonly spending what should support them, abroad. Where are the bowels of him who can enjoy either pleasure or ease in his mind, while he makes himself deaf to the cries of want and misery, which he may be said by his own cruelty to inflict on those who are *his bone and his flesh* ? There is, I hope, no one among you of a character so immoral and profligate as this. The present virtuous design in which you are engaged, is indeed a sufficient proof of the contrary. I shall therefore conclude this head with observing, that the virtues I have mentioned are not only necessary to the character and perfection of charity, but are the only sure preservative of common honesty. They are these virtues alone which can secure you against want ; against all temptation to cheat or defraud your neighbour, to make unlawful gains by extortion, to sell
your

your conscience for a bribe, your honesty and all your moral worth for filthy lucre's sake. By these only can you merit the trust and confidence of the world. They are the only pledge and security you can give of your fidelity and truth.

A second thing which I mentioned as deserving the regard you have paid to it, is that of observing the rules of piety and morality in all your meetings; and of banishing profaneness, detraction, and scandal from your discourse. The first of these is so contrary to that piety, the importance and necessity of which I have been recommending, that I need not enlarge upon it. It is so contrary to the spirit of religion, to the plain precepts of the gospel, to that reverence of heart and mind which we owe to the divine Being, so naturally tending to extirpate all sense of God and goodness from the mind; that it seems impossible for any one who calls himself a christian to allow himself seriously in the practice of it; or otherwise than thro' thoughtlessness or surprise to be ever guilty of it. It is so contrary to common sense and reason, so foolish
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and absurd in itself, that it would be a reproach to us as men, if we did not bear the name and character of christians. The latter, as it is at all times sinful, and one of the highest offences against christian charity, is particularly unfitting in a society of which charity is the very principle and foundation.

I proceed therefore to the last thing which I was to recommend, and which deserves particularly at your meetings to be attended to, and that is sobriety: a virtue not the less amiable or valuable for the countenance and indulgence which is too freely given to those who sin against it. It is indeed a reproach to our age and country that the contrary vice is so frequent as to be little molested by shame or censure. There is no source of evil so fruitful, none that has introduced so much pain and misery, poverty and infamy, sickness and death into the world as this. How many do we see reduced by it to beggary and want; how many thousands ruined in their health and strength, cut short in the prime of life, or reduced to a sudden, miserable and contemptible old age? How often

often is the peace and happiness of families disturbed, and how many scenes of guilt and wickedness are occasioned by it? Let me then exhort you to avoid with all your care and diligence this great and powerful evil. Let nothing tempt you to dishonour yourselves by a vice so mean and unmanly. Learn to prefer the silent but exquisite delights of temperance and innocence to all the mad and polluted joys it can offer you. Remember that this vice stands condemned in scripture, among the blackest, and such as in particular unfit us for the kingdom of heaven. *Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor extortioners, nor drunkards, shall inherit the kingdom of God and of Christ.*

1 Cor. vi.

9.
Gal. ix.

19.

And if any of you are unhappily brought under the power of this sin, let me again call upon you to consider what you owe to your families as well as to God and to yourselves. How happy may you make those who have a right to expect every thing from you, by abstaining from this vice. I am sensible that there is no habit which requires more resolu-

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tion to conquer and subdue than this. It requires rule as well as resolution. You must lay down to yourselves some wholesome regulations, a plan of life and conduct that may keep you out of the reach of temptation; some limitations within which your virtue will be secure, and which you must minutely and religiously observe, if you mean to secure it. By these means if steadily persisted in, and by the grace of God which will never be wanting to the endeavours of virtue, you will infallibly break the power of the most rooted and inveterate habits. Every victory gained will add strength to your virtue: and every future conquest will be still easier. Be not then discouraged by the difficulty which you must first engage; but remember that this difficulty, if not soon encountered, will become greater. Remember that it is this difficulty which makes it virtue; that the greater the difficulty the greater will be the virtue of conquering it; that you will thus gain the satisfaction of proving your own sincerity, of making some atonement for your past misconduct, and of offering up an acceptable sacrifice to God.

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And for those who are yet happily strangers to this vice, a little resolution and reflection will arm them against it. It is difficult to break the force of bad habits ; but it is easy to avoid contracting them. Avoid idleness and bad company which chiefly expose you to temptations from without : and you will have little to oppose from appetite and inclination within. For this vice is wholly unnatural. Nature always revolts, till corrupted by custom, against it. Be always then employed in the business of your profession. Reflect on the difference betwixt those who live soberly and orderly among your acquaintance, and those who spend their substance, their health as well as fortune in riotous living : and ask yourselves which of these two characters you would chuse for your own. Make the former your examples, your companions and friends : and shun the company and meetings of the latter, as you would an infected air in order to preserve your health.

Lastly, let me exhort you to extend the good principles with which you here

set out, through the whole of your life and conversation. Remember that you carry every where with you the character of men, and of christians. Let that prudent care which hath led you early to provide for your future well-being in this life, be extended to your greatest and only true interest, your happiness in the next. Be careful to *lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*: that when all the provisions, comforts and friendships of this life shall fail, you may be received into an everlasting habitation. If it be your prudence to provide against infirmity, age and misfortune here; what folly, inconsistency and madness will it be to neglect those provisions which are necessary to your eternal well-being hereafter? All other societies shall fail; but this shall continue for ever. The kingdom of Christ shall have no end. His church shall endure throughout all ages. Amidst all your engagements then, your connections and relations here, be ever mindful of that spiritual community of which you are members, that better kingdom to which you belong. In all your dealings with men, remember to act by *the law of Christ*:
that

that when you leave this perishing mutable society, you may gain the place of fellow citizens with the saints in the heavenly jerusalem; *a city which hath foundations, immutable and eternal, whose builder and maker is GOD.*

THE END.



As this discourse may fall into the hands of some who are not well provided with books of devotion, I have added two prayers for morning and evening: which I recommend to be constantly used by those who have no better forms at hand.

A MORNING Prayer.

O LORD, to whom I owe my life and every comfort of it, I most humbly pray that I may live always mindful of my dependence upon thee, and the mercies I have received from thee. May I consider that no action, word or thought of mine is unknown to thee; and therefore be at all times careful to think, to speak, and to do what is right. As I hope to be eternally happy, O let me seriously attend to those duties which must qualify me for being so. Grant that I may keep it always uppermost in my thoughts, that thy favour is only to be obtained by the holiness of my life, and by doing in it all the good in my power. Let it be ever in my heart to do all kind offices, and to promote peace and happiness among

among my neighbours. May I be true and faithful to all my engagements; especially to the promises and vows of obedience which I have made to thee—to govern my passions—to correct in myself every vicious inclination—to keep my body in temperance, soberness and chastity—to be true and just in all my dealings—and to do to others what I should in their case expect them to do unto me. Give me health and strength chearfully to go thro' the duties of my calling. Bless the labour of my hands, and accept of my honest industry, as a part of the duty I owe to thee, as well as to my family and country. Let no temptations of pleasure or of profit rob me of my honesty and virtue. In thy favour and the hope of thy eternal mercy I shall be happy in whatever station of life thou art pleased to place me. Let this hope be my comfort, my refuge and support in all circumstances; through *Jesus Christ* our Lord, in whose name and words, I pray for all mankind; *Our father, &c.*

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An EVENING Prayer.

O LORD, who hast preserved me this day, I bless thee for thus continuing thy care of, and goodness to me. Grant that I may shew my thankfulness by my sincere endeavours to perform thy will in all things. I most humbly beg forgiveness of every sin that I have committed; and it is likewise my most earnest prayer that I may never so dangerously deceive myself, as to think thou wilt forgive my sins, if I do not forsake them. Let it be my firmest belief that nothing can recommend me to thy favour, if I do not lead an holy and useful life; and that when I allow myself in any kind of guilt, even my prayers will be an abomination to thee. Give me grace so to live, as always in thy presence: and since all my actions and thoughts are known to thee, let me neither in deed or will be guilty of any thing that can displease thee. Enable me to improve in virtue and goodness; to correct in myself every bad habit, and to resist every vicious inclination. May
nothing

nothing disturb my rest this night. Vouchsafe me such refreshing sleep, as may fit me for the duties of the following day. Thou alone knowest how near my death may be ; and as every day brings me nearer to it, grant that I may become every day fitter for it. Prosper all who have done me good ; pardon all who have designed me evil : and grant that we may at last meet in peace and love in thy everlasting kingdom, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord and Saviour ; in whose name and words, I farther pray : *Our father, &c.*



The LORD's PRAYER,

*As it is sung in St. CHAD's CHURCH,
after the LECTURE on that part of the
CATECHISM.*

I.

FATHER of all, be thou alone
In heaven and earth ador'd ;
Earth is thy footstool, heaven thy throne,
Thou universal Lord.

II.

What power to praise thee and obey
Thy grace to man hath giv'n,
That praise and duty let him pay,
Till earth resemble heaven.

III.

This day be bread and peace our lot,
All else beneath the sun
Thou knows't, if best bestow'd or not,
And let thy will be done.

Thy

IV.

Thy love expecting, let us love,
Reliev'd, let us relieve;
Thy pity let our pity move,
Forgive, as we forgive.

V.

When from without temptations come,
Or lusts inflame within,
Thy grace descend and save us from
The greatest evil, sin.

VI.

Supreme in power, all nature waits
Obedient at thy call;
O first, O last, for thought too great,
O source and end of all.

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